

BSOS Vol. 6, 1936-32 no 933-939 ✓

Phonetic Notes on Urdu Records Nos. 6825 AK
and 6826 AK

By T. GRAHAM BAILEY

THESE records were made in 1920 to the dictation of a well-known professional story-teller, Bāqir 'Alī, who belonged to Delhi.

A phonetic transcript which has been published is of great value for the study of Urdu sounds. I made the original transcript of both records and had two proofs printed. Professor Daniel Jones, Professor of Phonetics in the University of London, who has to take responsibility for the publication of all transcripts in this series, went over my second proof, made some alterations, and prepared the final proof, which was ultimately printed. He is, therefore, responsible for the transcripts in their present form. I have, however, my proofs before me. The differences between his final print and my proofs are slight, and this article gives our joint views. Where there is any necessity for distinguishing them they are marked with the initials J. for his views and B. for mine.

The importance of these transcripts consists in the fact that the records still exist, and may be heard by any one who wishes to test the statements made. It is one thing to claim to have listened to a particular speaker and taken down his sounds. The speaker disappears, and beyond the author's reputation for accurate recording, there is no certainty that the transcription is correct. It is a very different thing when, as in this case, the speaker cannot disappear, and, what is equally important, cannot alter his pronunciation.

The records afford me much pleasure, for they support, in almost every detail, views which I have long held as to Urdu sounds, and taught my students. They were given ten years ago in the *Bulletin*, Vol. II, iii, 539 ff. Practically all that article expresses my views to-day.

CEREBRAL SOUNDS, called also retroflex. The transcriptions do not indicate the exact point on the palate touched by the tip of the tongue, but the introductory remarks make it clear. "i, ḍ, n, r: point of contact not far behind the teeth ridge, in a few instances on the teeth ridge." This is what we should expect. Similarly Dr. Mohiuddin Qadri in *Hindustani Phonetics* says of *l* and *ḍ*: "their point of articulation is just behind the teeth ridge" (p. 73), and of *r*: "the tip of the tongue strikes against the teeth ridge" (p. 92).

For the benefit of those who wish to study Urdu cerebrals, I indicate here those which in these records are specially far forward. I make the statement on my own responsibility. I have not consulted anyone else. The Nos. refer to page and line.

ɹ in *cittā* 2.8, *lotai* 3.18. *r* in *baya* 1.1. *layke* 1.6, *thori* 3.3, *bare* 7.1. *q* in *khanda* 5.15, *qub* 6.4. *buqāha* 6.24, 7.2, (but not in 7.3).

In *khatar* for *kaṭar* 5.16, and *latakne* for *latakne* 6.12 the *ɹ* is dental. These are mere slips.

In the following instances the *r* is rather fricative:—*baya* 1.1, *thore* 1.5, *dora* 3.6, *layke* 3.8, *barhae* 3.16. *bare* 7.1, *pakra* 7.12.

r is either a faint labio-dental *ɹ* or a *ɹ̥*. J. printed them all as *r* (except one *ro* 5.4, i.e. *ṛo*). In my proof I marked several as *ɹ̥*, meaning *ɹ̥*. It is always safe to advise English speakers to say *ɹ̥* and not *ɹ*. An English *ɹ̥* always sounds wrong.

y between vowels is often *ɛ*. Thus the ending *āyā* occurs 13 times. B. records *aēa* every time; J. *aēa* 12 times, *aṛa* once. English people greatly exaggerate the *y* quality of the sound. Similarly the ending *-iyā* occurs 8 times. Both B. and J. transcribed *ia* every time.

ain. I unhesitatingly teach my students to ignore '*ain*', in accordance with the usual practice of educated Delhi men in ordinary conversation. In the records there are eleven words containing '*ain*' when written in Urdu script. J. has recorded it in two out of the eleven. I did not consider it strong enough to be worth recording in any. This means that in the records the '*ain*' of the grammars does not exist, and all descriptions of how to pronounce it go for nothing. Even in words like *amāṭ*, *muṭṭā*, *arṣe*, *yugāshī*, where it would be easy to pronounce '*ain*' there is no trace of it. The other day a Delhi man, who is himself a lecturer on Urdu, told me that there was no difference at all between *bād*, wind, and *baṭ*, after.

I will, however, add this. I have heard Urdu speakers, when speaking rather self-consciously, pronounce, with a slight restriction of throat muscles, vowels which immediately precede or follow the letter '*ain*'.

Hamza, which is only another name for glottal stop, is not recorded at all. It is important to note this in view of statements sometimes made. *Hamza* exists solely in writing.

h is generally not an independent sound, but occurs before *ɹ* and *ɹ̥*. The word *sāḥū* occurs four times, and every time is pronounced *saṃhī*. *cāḥū* is once *caṃhī* and once *cāḥnī*.

h is sonant except in the combinations *kh*, *ch*, *ṭh*, and *ph*. We may consider it under two main headings: (1) *h* initial or immediately following a vowel; (2) *h* immediately following a consonant, to which it is more or less closely attached. The chief point which concerns us is to what extent is it omitted. In our records we have the following instances. (The word "unpronounced" must be understood as qualified by the addition "or at least inaudible".)

(1) (a) Initial, as *ḥissa*. *ḥāṭat*, *hai*, 56 times pronounced; 6 unpronounced (in *hai* 4; *hāṭ*, *huc*, once each; *huc* appears as *ūc*, printed *ev*).

(b) After vowel before *cs*. (including the combinations *rah-gae*, *rah-namūn*, *kah-sunāṭā*), e.g. *gunāhgar*, *bahne*, *jahlān*; pron. 12, unpron. 0.

(c) After vowel: pron. only in the word *larḥī* 3 times; unpron. 17; viz. *yeh* je 14; *roh* ṛo, *mūh*, *jogh* once each. The *h* of *yeh* is never heard in these records, even though twice it is followed by a vowel. *roh* occurs once and is followed by a vowel, but the *h* is not sounded. The phrase *jogh hai* is pronounced *jaḡa e*.

(d) Between vowels: as *kahā*, *mahallat*, *sarḥī*, *saḥāre*, together with the words *shahr*, *rahm*, *qah*, which like other similar words are invariably dissyllables. *h* pron. 31; unpron. 16. All these 16 are in the second record, which is more conversational than the first. They are *kahā* 8, *nahī* 5, *saḥānū* 2, *jahā* 1.

(2) *cs*. + *h*: (a) Initial; examples: *choṭā*, *thoyā*, *phirṇā*, *jukkā*; pron. 57; unpron. 0.

(b) Between vowels; either with single *cs*. as *cirḥo*, *inhā*, *āḥhī*, *dikhā*; or with double *cs*. as *acchā*, *bieche*, *buḡḡhā*, *saṃjhā*, *barḥī*, *khallḥāḥḥā*; pron. 26, unpron. 8 (*mye* 4, all in more solemn first record; *hāṭ* 4, all in second).

Of the 26, 17 are with single *cs*. and 9 with double. There is no instance of *h* omitted after double *cs*.

(c) Final; never pron.; unpron. 14, viz. *saṃjh* 3, *mye* 2, *hāṭ* 4, *kuch*, *sāḥ* 2, *dekḥ*, *bojh*, *kuch* 1 each. *h* is not pronounced in any of these. In 7 the *h* follows a sonant sound, and in 7 a sord. We should, however, notice that there is no instance of *-ḥ* or *-ph*.

(d) Followed by *cs*. pron. 2, *nihār* twice; unpron. 1, *kalhgar*.

VOWELS. The two most interesting vowels are those written in Roman script *-ai* and *-au*. We are almost always told that they are pronounced like *ai* in English *aide*, and like *au* in German *Haas* or *auf*, or *our* in English *how*. Actually they are like *a* in "man" and

au in "maul". In both cases they may be either single vowels or diphthongs. When *ai* is a diphthong the second vowel is a variety of *e* (or *ɛ*), and for *au* the second part is *o*.

The records confirm these statements.

The sound *ai* occurs 52 times and every time both of us have transcribed it *æ* with or without a second *e* or *ɛ*. Actually J. recorded it 26 times as simple *æ*, and 26 as a diphthong *æe* or *æɛ*. B. 28 times as *æ* and 24 as *æe*, *æɛ*. The important point is that neither of us ever recorded the vowel in "aisle".

The following are details:—

ai or *aī* final, as in *hai*, *ai*, *hai*, *mai*, 28, of which 22 are *æe* or *æɛ* and 6 *æ*.

Not final, as in *maidān*, *naiza*, *aīsā*, *paīdā*, *saif* 6 times. Here *ai* for *-ā* followed by *h*, as in *shahr*, *paīhān*, *bahūā*, *rahm*, *qah*, *kah*, *rah*. This occurred 18 times, and every time B. J. transcribed *æ*.

Therefore stressed *-ah*, final, or followed by *es*, is always pronounced *æ*. *au* occurs in *aur* 21 times; *danda* 2; and once each in *darya*, *aulā*, *faulā*, *garānī*, *avāsh*, *mukhā*. (This last word is often *pn. nahā*) 29 altogether. The records show almost always the sound of English *-au* in *maul*. J. records 28 out of 29 as *ɔ* or *o*; in the 21 cases of *aur* he has *ɔ* 20 times and *er* once. I have marked one *aur* as *er*, and in other words have twice transcribed the vowel as *o*: elsewhere always with *ɔ* or *o*.

In the remaining words J. has *ɔ* 5 times and *o* 3 times. Thus, altogether, out of the 29, J. has a simple vowel *ɔ* 25 times, *o* once, and the diphthong 3 times. B. had the diphthong only twice.

Conclusion. The normal pron. of the vowel is always either *ɔ* or *o*, and the simple *ɔ* is much the commoner of the two.

The vowel *a*, stressed or unstressed, usually tends towards *æ*.

The influence of *h* on preceding short vowels. I explained this in detail in the article referred to. The records before us confirm the statements there made.

Stressed *-ah*. When *-ah* is either followed by a *cs*, or final (and stressed), it is not *af* but *æf*. There are 18 instances here, and in every case the vowel is *æ*. There is not a single case of *a*.

It should also be noted that *rahm*, *qah*, *shahr*, *rahm*, written as monosyllables, of which there are 8 instances, are always disyllables. Students should be made to pronounce them so, and plainly told that to pronounce them as monosyllables is wrong.

'ahā, e.g. *rahā*, *kahā* (so too *gahā*, *rahā*), i.e. *'ah* followed by *a*, is always *'ahā* *'aha*.

The preliminary notes say that the first vowel in words like *kahā* (sometimes transcribed *ā*) is *a*-like. This may be seen also from the transcription. Of words of this type there are 18. J. has the *a* in 13 cases and *ā* in 5 (it being understood that this *ā* is *a*-like). B. transcribes it in every case *-ā*.

Few examples occur of the other cases mentioned loc. cit., p. 545. *'ih* and *'ah* final or before *es*, become *e* and *o*. Here we see it in the word *qih*, which is always *je* and in the one case of *'wah* which is *ro* or *ūo*. *'ah* followed by *ī*, *o*, *ū* is unchanged, see *kahī*, *kahū*, *nahī*, *naī*.

No conclusion can be drawn from the word *nahī*, for it is unique, with several common pronunciations. One may hear *nahī*, *naī*, *nī*, *nehī*, *nei*, *nahī*, *nai*.

h followed by *u* (not *u*) tends towards *ɔ*, e.g. *bahut*, *polunca* (in the record the *u* has become absorbed in the *h*).

In connection with the English habit of reducing final unstressed *a* and *e* to *ə*, and *i* to *ɪ* it is worthy of note that in these records we have final unstressed *-a* 168 times, all of which are pure *-a*; final unstressed *-e* 110 times, every time correctly uttered *-e*; final unstressed *-i* 98 times, every time correctly uttered *-i*, never *ɪ*. Baḡir 'Alī, when reciting, was apt to heighten final *e* to *ɪ* or *i*, *o* to *u* or *ū*. Thus the word *kī* usually pronounced *ke* or *kī*, is sometimes as high as *kī* in the records, and is rarely *ke*.

The *iḡfāl* occurs 8 times, as in *alḡāl e padārī*, *nūn e shabīna*. It is always *e*, never *ɪ*. This is the more remarkable in view of the speaker's frequent use of high vowels, but it is correct.

Nasal Vowels. Apart from recognized nasal vowels, there is a tendency to nasalize all vowels in contact with nasal consonants. Thus *ne* may become *nē*, and *qulāmū gulāmū*.

In words usually written with a final *es*, + *r* there is always a vowel before the final *r*; e.g. *fahrr*, *shahr*, become *faxar*, *ṣəher*.

The negative *na* is often joined to the following word and pronounced *na* or *na*.

The most important conclusions from the records are:—

(1) *ai*, *au* are pronounced *æ* (sometimes *æe*) and *ɔ*; thus *paīdā* is *pæda* (or *pæda*), and *tanba* is *taɔa*.

(2) The point of contact for the cerebral sounds *t*, *q*, *r* is slightly behind the teeth ridge.

(3) *'ahu* may be ignored.

(4) *qāf* is very weak, often not distinguishable from *kāf*.

APPENDIX

6794 AK. Prodigal Son

Recited by Maulānī Saif, of Lucknow, May 16, 1920

Transcribed from the record by T. Grahame Bailey

In order to complete these notes, I add a few remarks on a Lucknow record of the "Prodigal Son". So far as I know, Professor Jond has not heard it. It does not differ much from the two Delhi ones, and for conversation, as distinct from recitation, it is a safer guide. This is specially noticeable in its pronunciation of *au*, *ai*, final *-o*, and final *-a*.

ek jaks ke do larke the; choṭe ne bap se kaha "abba jān, mal mālā me mera hissa mujhe de dijiye. us ne apna sarmāṭā donō ko bat di, thore hi dinō me choṭa beṭa apni cizē samet samet ek dūr dūr magam par calta hua. ar vāhā apna mal badalni me u'ra diā. jab vo kul dōlat barbad kar cuga, to us mulk me saxt kal parā, ar vo nan e jabina ko mohṭay ho gēa. us vaqt ek rā is ke dāvrazē ja parā, jis me use apne khetō par suar carāne bhey diā; faqā kaji se je nobat pohnā thi ki jo ki bhūsi jo suarō ko di jai ē, āgar use koi dēta, to usi se baxuji apna peṭ bhar lēta; lekin koi itna bhi vavadar nā'thā.

jab vo apne hof me āēa to scene lagā ki mere bap ke krne ki mazdūr bāfaragat khate pite hā, kuch andaz bhi karṭe hā, or mē bhukō mar rāhā hū; bap si jakar kji nā kahū ki mē xudā ka or ap ka gunahgar hū, ab mē ap ka farzand kēhe jāne ke laq nehī, mujhe apne mazdūrō ke zūmre me rakh lijiye. pas uṭkar sidhā apne bap ko pas calā. abhi fasile par thā ki bap ne use ate dekha, dōrkār gālō lagā diā or pjar karne lagā. beṭe ne kaha "abba, mē xudāvand e kavin ki or ap ki nazārō me mujrim hū, or ab is kabīl nehī ki ap ka beṭa kēhlā". lekin bap ne apne mulazimō ko hukam diā "acchi se acchi pojāk, gūṭhī, jūta isē pinhāo, or ek farbeh bachra jakar kabab lagāo ki sab meze se khāē or xujiā manāē, is hē ki mera beṭa marīxar zindā hua hā, khokar phir milā hā."

vo log tēhl pēhl me masruf hue; bārā beṭa us vaqt khetō par thā; palāṭkar jab makka magan ke karīb pohnā to raks o farod hā avaz kan me ai; ek mulazim ko bulakar darjāft kiā ki jī kja ho rahā hā? "us ne arz kiā "ap ke bhāi sab ae hue hā, or ap ke abba jīa ne unē sahī salamat pakar ek farbeh bachre ki kurbanī karāi hā." je sunkar vo naraz hua or ghar ke andar nā gēa. us vaqt bap nikla or use manāne lagā. asna e javab me bap se us ne kaha "gāzab xudā ka, itnī mudāt se mē ap ki xidmat kar rāhā hū or kisi vaqt

ap ki hukam udhī nehī ki, lekin kabhi ap ne ek bakri ka bacca bhi mujhe nā diā ki mē apne dōstō ki dāvrat karṭā. māgar jab ap ka je larke āēa jis ne ap ki dōlat ājāji me urā dālī to ap ne us ke hē moṭā tazā bachra zaba karāēa hā." us ne kaha "beṭa, tūm to hamēja se mere sat ho, or mere pas jo kuc hī hā vo sab tūmārā hā, lekin jāsān karne or xuj hone ka jehī mahāl hā, ki tūmhārā bhāi marīxar zindā hua hā, khokar phir milā hā."

Notes

au and *ai* are single vowels *o* and *æ* respectively; thus *dāulat* is *dolat* and *maṭ* is *mæ*.

Final *-e* and *-o* are not so high as in the Delhi records. *ā* is almost always *a*; when very markedly so, it has been transcribed *a*, otherwise *ā*. For this vowel the Delhi records are preferable.

r is nearly always *ṛ*.

i and *ī* have point of contact generally just behind teeth ridge; in a few cases a little further back.

j tends to be fricative; point of contact not far from teeth ridge. In the record it occurs eleven times; of these nine or ten are rather fricative, and only one or two have a real strike. The strike pronunciation is to be recommended.

h is *h* except in *kh*, *th*, *ch*, *ph*.

ʿain. Words written with *ʿain* occur five times, but the *ʿain* is never pronounced.

qāf. There are eleven instances of *qāf*. The pronunciation varies from *q* to a back variety of *k*, on the whole nearer *q* than *k*.

§ 1. 1. 5. *cuga* for *cuka*.

§ 3. 1. 2. *maka* *magān* is a reciter's slip for *makan*.